



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

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News Release

WEST PALM BEACH MAN CHARGED FOR ILLEGALLY TRANSPORTING HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

MIAMI—R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Jesus Torres, special agent-in-charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Barbara Barnet, special agent in charge, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, and Willie Gripper, Jr., Manager of Security & Hazardous Materials Division, Federal Aviation Administration, Atlanta Regional Office, announced that defendant, Harold J. DeGregory, Jr., of West Palm Beach, Florida, was arrested and appeared in federal Magistrate Court in Miami today after a federal grand jury sitting in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, returned an eight-count Indictment charging him with conspiracy to transport and smuggle in air commerce property containing hazardous material specifically the radioactive isotope Iridium-192, from the United States to the Bahamas.

The Indictment charges that from July 28, 2003 through November 2, 2004, DeGregory, as the President and registered agent of a company known as H&G Import Export of Fort Lauderdale (H&G), agreed with Bahamas Oil Refining Company ("BORCO"), located in Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, to transport Iridium-192 to and from the Bahamas. BORCO acquired the Iridium-192 for use in industrial radiography, from a company located in the United States, which would legally ship the hazardous material in interstate commerce to H&G. H&G was responsible for further transportation to BORCO. Depleted Iridium-192 was to be returned to the United States-based supplier for re-reprocessing when its useful life was spent.

According to the allegations of the Indictment and statements in Court, neither DeGregory nor his company, H&G, was licensed, trained, or certified to handle, load, transport, carry, or place in air commerce hazardous radioactive material. Although Iridium-192 has legitimate industrial uses, it also has the capacity to pose public health risks if not properly handled.

On Aug. 8, 2003 and Feb. 5, 2004, DeGregory flew to Freeport from Fort Lauderdale in a twin-engine Piper aircraft. On each occasion, he transported a container, commonly referred to as a "pig," containing Iridium-192. On Oct. 28, 2004, DeGregory sub-contracted the air transportation of an additional pig containing Iridium-192 to Amelia Airways, a commercial air carrier, which

transported the hazardous and radioactive material from Fort Lauderdale to Freeport. At no time did DeGregory submit the required Hazardous Material Manifests as required by law. Moreover, DeGregory submitted materially false documents to U.S. Customs and Border Protection reflecting that he was transporting cargo, but omitting any mention of the Iridium-192.

On Nov. 2, 2004, DeGregory flew from Freeport, Bahamas, to Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport with Iridium-192 aboard the aircraft. DeGregory provided a customs declaration form to Customs officials which failed to disclose the hazardous radioactive cargo secreted in a wing compartment of his aircraft. Upon inspection, Customs and Border Protection Inspectors discovered the pig containing the depleted Iridium-192.

In addition to the criminal charges, the Indictment also seeks forfeiture of the two twin-engined Piper aircraft DeGregory allegedly employed to carrying the undeclared hazardous materials into and out of the United States.

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of ICE and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the State of Florida Department of Health, Radiological Health Program. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Thomas Watts-Fitzgerald and Lynn D. Rosenthal.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.